

[Pedro M. Rodriguez]

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Words 1539 [?]

AUG 29 1938 [?] PIONEER STORY

I was born in Lincoln, Lincoln County, New Mexico, on October 10, 1874, and have lived all my life in Lincoln County. My father, Jesus Rodriguez, was born in El Paso, Old Mexico, (which is El Paso, Texas now,) but I can not remember what year he was born as he was killed when I was about nine years old. My mother, Francisca Sanchez, daughter of Jose Sanchez, was born in Manzano New Mexico. I do not know the date of her birth, she died when I was about twelve years old, at Ruidoso, New Mexico. Father and Mother were married in Lincoln New Mexico about the year [1866?], and lived there until my father was killed in [1883?] by Sheriff Amado Chavez of Lincoln. Mother then went to Ruidoso New Mexico to live with my grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Fernando [Herrern?]. Father was a private in Captain William Brady's Company A, First Regiment of Cavalry, at Fort Stanton, New Mexico. He enlisted for one year, from October 27, [1864?] to October 27, [1865?]. He was discharged at Fort Sumner New Mexico. He spent most of his time in the army fighting the Indians, for in tho'se days the Indians roamed all over Lincoln County, and were always killing people and stealing cattle and horses.

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My grandfather, Fernando Herrera, lived in Ruidoso (where Hollywood is now located), and he owned about four hundred head of cattle and run them in Turkey Canyon which was in the Mescalero country. The Indians had been killing the cattle for meat so my grandfather got a posse of men together and started out to gather his cattle and bring them to the Ruidoso, where he could watch them.

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In the posse was Billy the Kid, Andres Herrera, Manuel Silva, George Washington, and grandfather. They started out early one morning for Turkey Canyon. When they got to Turkey Spring about half way up the Canyon, they met Chief Kamisa and about twenty-five Indians. Kamisa was Chief of the Mescalero Apache Indians. While the posse was talking to Chief Kamisa the Indians formed a circle around the men and told Kamisa to tell them they were going to kill every one of them. Billy the Kid told the men in Spanish, to get off their horses and tighten up their front cinches and follow him. Billy mounted his horse with a six gun in each hand, and started hollering and shooting as he rode toward the Indians. The rest of the men followed, shooting as they went. They broke thro'ugh the line of Indians and not a one of the men were hurt. They gathered a few head of cattle and took them home and put them in a corral. The next morning Kamisa and a band of Indians came to my grandfather's house. Kamisa called to grandfather to come out, he wanted to talk to him. Grandfather and Kamisa had always been pretty good friends so grandfather went to the door and told him that if he would butcher three beeves and give them to the Indians, "we do you no more harm." The Indians kept there promise and never stole any more cattle. Grandfather and Kamisa were good friends from then on. I remember Kamisa well. He and I were good friends and I always liked to talk to him.

The Indians killed my father's brother, Marcial Rodriguez. He had gone to the house of Servanio [Apodoca?], who lived near Blue-water, in the Capitan Mountains. He went there on New Year's Eve, to hunt some game with [?]. They got up at daybreak to go look for their horses. There was a flat covered with Juniper trees and the limbs grew very close to

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the ground. There was a spring, Ojo Agua Asule, at the foot of the Mountains on this flat. While the two men were crossing this flat a band of Indians were hid in the Juniper trees and they shot at the two men and mortally wounded [?]. He was shot in the back and [?] was shot in one leg. They fought the Indians all day and as it began to get dark Marcial told [?] to run for the arroyo and save himself, as Marcial felt he was going to die. [?] made a run for the arroyo with the Indians after him, but as it was getting dark he was able to get away from them. [?] and Marcial killed several of the Indians that day. [?] walked all night long and came out at the Robert E. Casey ranch. (This man was father of Lillie Casey [?].) This ranch was about four miles north of [?], New Mexico. He told the Casey men about the Indians and that he had left Marcial Rodriguez wounded up on the flat. The Casey's formed a posse and sent word up and down the Rio Bonito for every one that could go with them to meet them at Agua Asule. (Bluewater) The posse left Casey's ranch just at daybreak and went to the [?] house and found the Indians had been there and taken Juanita Sanchez de [?], who was the wife of Servanio [?], and who was about to become a mother at the time. They took up the Indians trail and followed them back thro'ugh the Agua Azule Flat where they found Marcial's body. They Indians had cut off his right arm and scalped him before leaving him. The posse dug a grave and buried him where he lay. (This happened about the first of January, 1874, and what was called the Agua Azule Flat is now known as Bluewater.) Posses from Lincoln and all up and down the river started after the Indians and overtook them at the west end of the Capitan Mountains. Here they had a fight 4 with them and killed quite a few, but found that the Apodaca woman was not with this band. Someone in the posse noticed two squaws up on the side of the mountain and started after them. The Apodaca woman was with them and when the two squaws saw the white men coming thy split the Apodaca woman's head open with an axe and made their getaway. When the men got to the Apodaca woman she was dead and they found that she had given birth to her baby, which was a boy. They brought the baby to Lincoln and Apodaca gave him to a woman named Tulio Garule Stanley to care for. She raised this baby and called him Jose Apodaca, who is living in Carrizozo today. Servanio

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Apodaca was killed about 1875, (by the Tejanos) while he was taking a load of wheat to Dowlin's Mill on the Ruidoso.

My father was so mad at the Indians for killing his brother that he wanted to kill every Indian that he saw. He went to the Torres Ranch one night to way-lay two Indian women that he knew could talk Spanish and were very friendly with my father, but he hated them because they were Indians and wanted to kill them. He had bought some new cartridges for his six shooter from Jose Montano's store. He waited for the women to cross the Bonito river from the Torres Ranch to their house. He heard them coming and drew his six shooter and pulled the trigger but no report. He tried the next cartridge and the next and the next and never fired a shot. He took his six shooter and broke it all to pieces over a rock in the river bed. My father was a very mean man when he was drinking and was always in some kind of trouble. He was killed by Sheriff Amado Chavez in Lincoln. He had been on a drunk for several days and was hunting for Chavez to kill him. Chavez had arrested him and put him in jail. The jail in those days was a deep hole dug in the ground with an adobe room built over it. The room had one window and one door. When the prisoners were real bad they were put in the hole. The jailer had a step ladder that he put down in the hole and put his prisoners in and then he took the step ladder and hid it. They did not put my father in the hole that night, he was left in the adobe room and in some way during the night he got out and got his gun and went hunting for Chavez. He found him at the house of [??]. Her son, Demetrio, was with Chavez when father went to the house and knocked on the door with his gun and asked for Amado Chavez. Demetrio Perez opened the door just a little bit and told father that Chavez was not there, but father stuck his boot in the crack of the door and was just about to get into the room when Chavez shot him. He died about three days later.

My grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Fernando Herrera raised me. I have been a janitor of the Lincoln County Courthouse for the past six years.

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NARRATOR: Pedro M. Rodriguez, Carrizozo, New Mexico, Aged 64 years.